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INFO ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
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SIPDIS
STATE FOR NEA/ARP
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

¶1. SUMMARY: All Omani dailies carried news agency articles covering President Obama's Al Arabiya interview, but only one locally-generated comment appeared: Arabic private daily "Al Watan" said the interview reaffirmed the themes of the President's inaugural address, commenting that nothing prevents him from restoring the respect between American and the Muslim world. On February 1, "Al Watan" commented that divisions among Palestinians spilled into conflicts over who should be the rightful representative of the Palestinians. On February 1, government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" said that the recent peaceful elections in Iraq were an important step towards stability. END SUMMARY.

"Restoring the Respect"

¶2. On January 29, private Arabic daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) commented on President Obama's interview on Al Arabiya, saying he has the ability to restore respect between America and the Muslim world. According to "Obama From an Islamic Perspective":

"President Obama wanted, through appearing on "Al Arabiya", to reaffirm the theme of his inauguration speech regarding the Islamic world not being an enemy. There is nothing that prohibits him from restoring the respect that America had with Muslim world. His views, compared to those of George W. Bush, open doors of hope by taking a different path with the Muslim world. Obama started his era with an intimate look at our world, showing that he is ready to use dialogue as a tool rather than violence. He revealed that he will listen rather than dictate, as the U.S. has done before. George Mitchell is speaking with key parties, even though no one is expecting a quick solution. The Arab and Islamic world are hoping that Obama's words will translate into action."

"No Partner for Negotiations"

¶3. On February 1, "Al Watan" stated that Palestinians are divided over who should be their rightful representative, commenting that Palestinians themselves are the representatives of their interests. According to: "The Palestinian People Should be the Representatives":

"The [Palestinian] struggle for independence is divided over who should be the legitimate representative [of the Palestinians]. The Palestinians themselves are divided into groups, and their competition leads them astray of the real principals of their cause while Palestinian suffering increases day by day. As a result, solidarity with the Palestinian cause from regional and international organizations has decreased and led to the belief that there is no partner for negotiations. The Palestinian people themselves are the representatives of their opinions and interests."

"An Important Step Toward Stability"

¶4. On February 1, government Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) praised the participation of Iraqis in the recent provincial elections, saying that Iraqis are determined to move forward. According to "Iraqi Elections: Another Step Towards Stability":

"The elections that took place in 14 Iraqi districts are, in reality, an important step toward security and stability. Violence has increased in an attempt to obstruct elections and provoke fear in Iraqis to stop them from participating in the elections. Iraqis, though, did not respond to these threats and challenges, showing their determination to put an end to the situation. The election in Iraq is important because of the great numbers of Iraqi participation and because it took place in front of a large number of international observers, ensuring the objectivity and integrity."

GRAPPO

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